friendly relations with foreign states or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence, for reason to be recorded in writing .... ." The Rule 419A of the Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951 framed under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 lays down elaborate mechanism for lawful interception. As per the conditions of the telecom service licences, the Licensee shall ensure protection of privacy of communication and ensure that unauthorized interception of messages does not take place.

Introduction of VRS in BSNL

1847. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any move to introduce Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) in BSNL;

(b) the total number of employees targeted to be reduced through VRS;

(c) whether the employees and their recognized union has been consulted on the same;

(d) if so, the outcome of the consultation; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, BSNL Management is considering a Voluntary Retirement Scheme for its non-executive employees. However, no VRS scheme has been approved so far.

(b) No specific numbers have been targeted for VRS. However, for assessing financial implications of the proposed VRS scheme, a tentative number of 20,000 has been taken.

(c) and (d) Representatives of employees Union have been consulted a number of times on VRS in BSNL. However, employees' union representatives are opposed to VRS in BSNL.

(e) Does not arise in view of (c) and (d) above.

Contract and casual workers in BSNL

1848. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of contract and casual workers engaged in BSNL;

(b) the numbers of those who are deployed in permanent and perennial jobs;

(c) whether these workers are covered by PF, ESI and Minimum Wages Act; and

(d) the steps being taken to regularize the contract workers engaged in permanent/perennial nature of jobs according to the rules of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, 12830 contract and casual labourers are engaged in BSNL.

(b) No contract labourer is being engaged in jobs of permanent or perennial nature. However, 718 casual labourers are being engaged in jobs of perennial nature.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

Meeting QoS parameters by service providers

1849. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that no service provider has achieved all the benchmarks prescribed by TRAI for Quality of Service parameters for various services including Wireline (Fixed Line) services in the country particularly in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether TRAI has recommended any action against the operators for not complying with the QoS parameters, so far;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) As per the Performance Monitoring Report of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for the quarter ending 31.03.07, some of the service providers are meeting the benchmarks for all the Quality of Service parameters in some of the service areas including Himachal Pradesh.

(b) According to the service providers, shortage of spectrum and number of Points of Interconnection (POI) are the key factor for degradation to performance and quality of service for wireless access.

(c) to (e) As per Section 29 (penalty for contravention of direction of TRAI) of TRAI Act, 1997, if a person violates the direction of the TRAI, such person shall be punishable with fine as per provisions in TRAI Act, 1997. TRAI has issued a direction on 7th June, 2005 to all service providers to provide Interconnection on the request of the interconnection seeker within 90 days of the applicable payments made by the interconnection seeker. BSNL had gone to TDSAT against this direction. The matter is pending with TDSAT and *sub-judice*.

Downsizing of employees in DoP

†1850. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the decrease/increase in number of employees of the Department of Posts during the last three years;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.